

George Morris

World of Labor

Kicking Back at CIA

OF LATE there have been signs that all is far from unity and sweetness in the Meany-Lovestone-dominated, CIA-orientated International Affairs Department of the AFL-CIO. Even some of the insiders have publicly kicked up at the "CIA line," now that it is quite the fashion for many persons to swear "they are not and never have been in the CIA or had any knowledge of organizations fronting for it."

By the way, we are still waiting for some statement from the AFL-CIO on the four-part series in the Washington Post almost five months ago in which Meany's International Affairs Department, under Jay Lovestone, his operation man, was disclosed to be what amounts to an arm of the CIA. Such silence amounts to eloquent "confession" to the truth of much in that series.

ONE OF THE LAST cracks in the wall of secrecy that has always surrounded Lovestone's domain, resulted from the attack upon his policy in the Dominican Republic, which was leveled by Victor Reuther, a member of the AFL-CIO's International committee and head of the United Auto Workers union's committee on international affairs.

Returning from a trip to the Island along with Bayard Rustin, Norman Thomas, and others of a liberal group calling itself the Committee on Free Elections in the Dominican Republic, Reuther sharply denounced the AFL-CIO's American Institute for Free Labor Development. He accused the Institute, which is chaired by Meany and financed by industrialists and the U.S. government, of subsidizing CONTRAL which he "called a very small and unrepresentative group" in Dominican labor.

AIFLD ignored the much larger unions associated with Juan Bosch's backers and chose instead the insignificant Rightist-dominated group that backed the ultra-reactionary "triumvirate" which the U.S. State Department had set up. CONTRAL, echoing the CIA line, denounced Bosch and the major labor federation as "Communist dominated."

ANOTHER CASE of embarrassment for the CIA and the State Department, came at the recent Inter-

American Conference of Labor Ministers at Venezuela. Newsmen received two copies of an address which a U.S. delegate, Joseph Beirne, president of the Communication Workers of America and an AFL-CIO vice-president, was to deliver there. One copy was the report which he gave, the other was a censored copy, with deletions and rewrites by the State Department's press office. Beirne's own text was difficult to secure because agents were put on the job to round up all copies that had been released and to destroy them. The New York Times, in its extensive report on the affair, quoted Beirne as telling newsmen "I'm sticking by my address, and if you can't get a copy I'll show you mine in longhand."

WHAT DID BEIRNE say that was so objectionable? According to the Times, he said:

"When we speak of non-violent change, the priority if it should come to that, is on change, not on non-violence."

"We believe in obtaining social reforms through lobbying and voting rather than by fighting, but if anyone were to take away our rights to lobby, to strike or to vote, you can be sure we would fight."

And further:

"It is material progress that the workers of Latin America need and demand today. They are not concerned with declarations and conferences and plans. They want houses, education and higher wages. I am not satisfied with my own government's involvement and I am even less satisfied with involvements and actions of other governments."

Another passage which was doctored by the censors originally declared for support of "our Latin American brothers" if they fought dictators.

The question is not only what Beirne meant by his remarks but, more importantly, that he, as a labor member of the delegation, chairman of the AFL-CIO Latin Affairs Committee, defied both the U.S. Government and the Lovestone-Meany CIA line.

This was termed most significant by the labor delegates of the other governments who have long taken it for granted that the AFL-CIO people echo anything that comes out of the State Department.

The Times reported one delegate as telling an American newsman that when Beirne "overrode" four State Department people and issued a press statement saying he advocated change in social conditions even if it meant violence, many of us woke up for the first time during the conference.

The Latin-Americans were treated to a dramatic showing how after many years of servile trailing of the State Department and its CIA through every turn and twist, enough self-respect came up in one labor leader to stand up and say: "I've had enough!"